pass through of international prices of crude oil to domestic consumers, reduction in general CEN VAT rate and customs duties, rejuvenation of agriculture under the National Food Security Mission and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana. The Government has also increased the allocation for infrastructure programmes in the Budget 2008-09, which will help in addressing some of the supply side constraints towards sustaining growth.

Guidelines for recruitment and deployment of banks recovery agents

4195. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether taking note of increasing instances of incidents of bank's recovery agenst using intimidation and force on unwary defaulters, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed a slew of guidelines for bank's for recruitment and deployment of agents;

(b) if so, whether these include police verification of agent's antecedents and imparting a pre-induction training for at least 100 hours;

(c) what are the other guidelines, the RBI wants the banks to comply with; and

(d) whether those guidelines are applicable to credit card companies and telecom operators?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued guidelines on 24th April, 2008 on recovery agents engaged by banks. The RBI has advised, the banks to ensure verification of antecedents c-f employees of recovery agencies engaged by them. Police verifications has been suggested as one of the pre-employment due diligence measures. RBI has also stipulated that all recovery agents should undergo a training-cum-certification programme offered by Indian Institute of Banking and Finance (IIBF). The course prepared by Indian Banks' Association (IBA) and IIBF envisages 100 hours class room training.

(c) and (d) Guidelines have also been issued by RBI to banks on Fair Practice Code for Lenders, regarding outsourcing of financial services, on Credit Card Operations, etc. IBA has also formulated "Model Code for Collection of Dues and repossession of Security", which has been recommended to banks for adoption and implementation. Further, the Code of Banks' Commitments to customers formulated by Banking Codes and Standards Boards of India provides, *inter-alia,* that the collection policy by the bank be built on courtesy fair treatment and persuasion and the bank follows security repossession policy in consonance with the law.

These guidelines are applicable to all Commercial Banks including Credit Card Companies set up by banks. Telecom borrowers are not covered by these guidelines.

Selling of shares of BALCO

†4I96. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a single private company has bought 51 per cent shares of Bharat Aluminium Company Ltd. (BALCO) a public sector company recently;

(b) if so, the name of that company and whether it is an Indian Company or a foreign one;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether any complaint regarding this disinvestments has been made by any trade union or any other quarter;

(d) if so, the name of the complainant; and

(e) the details of the complaint made and the actions, taken by Government on this complaint so far.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S. S. PALANIMANICKAM) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. On 2nd March, 2001, the Government had sold 51 per cent of the equity of Bharat aluminium Company Limited (BALCO) to M/s. Sterlite Industries (India) Limited, a company duly incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956.

(c) to (e) The details are being compiled and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Credit flow to the Small Scale Industries and Agriculture Sectors

4197. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that commercial banks are unable to increase the flow of credit to small scale industries and agriculture sectors;

(b) if so, the details of credit given to these sectors in the last three years; and

(c) what steps Government is taking to step up credit to these sectors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The credit flow from Public Sector Banks to small scale industries (SSI) and agriculture sectors has increased considerably during the last three years. As reported by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the outstanding credit given by the Public Sector Banks to SSI & agriculture sector during the last three years is as under:-

(Rupees in crore)

Year	SSI	Agriculture
2005	68,000	1,09,917
2006	82,434	1,55,220
2007@	1,04,703	2,05,091

@ Provisional

(c) The Government of India (Gol) and Reserve Bank of India have taken various steps to ensure timely and adequate credit to both the SSI and agriculture sectors, as given in the Statement.

Statement

Steps to step up credit to SSI and Agriculture Sector.

- To encourage banks to lend more to the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sector, it has been announced in the Budget for 2007-08 that banks will be advised to have regard to the credit rating acquired by an SME while fixing the interest rate.